

# The New Olympian

March 2009

The Monthly Newsletter of the Olympic View Community Church of the Brethren  
tel. 206-525-8900 • www.olympicchurch.org e-mail: info@olympicchurch.org

## Living the Word

By Pastor Ken Miller Rieman

The season of Lent is upon us. Drenched in the heaviness of words like 'sin' and 'repentance,' and the certain knowledge that our journey takes us toward Jesus' death, Lent can be a hard season. Those of us who have grown up in the church may well be used to the traditions of fasting, or of giving up some thing in our lives which has idolatrous energy.

Hard and heavy things indeed, especially when their contemplation or practice so easily stands as an obstacle to those for whom 'church' seems only to be a place of judgment and narrow-mindedness.

Considered more deeply, the opposite emerges. Lent is a time that positions us for recovery and renewal. Let's clear away some of the linguistic rubbish that hides the good news. While some meaning can be lost in translation, the greater danger in communication comes from not trying to translate at all.

'Sin' is a problem, and I'm talking about more than the thing itself. Our culture has such a problem with the word, that we have a hard time even talking about what the word represents. Its Hebrew root means 'missing the mark.' Sadly, many churches have employed the name 'sin' as a form of social control, used to guilt peo-



ple into certain behavior or limit their access to full participation in the life of the community.

Similarly, 'repentance' suggests the hoops through which those seeking forgiveness and grace of their spiritual leaders must jump. But sin is simply that which stands in the way of our healthy and loving relationships with God and others. Paul uses the word 'righteousness' to describe 'right' relationships. The Hebrew word which describes the state of rightness is 'Shalom,' often translated as 'Peace.'

So sin can be different things for different people. That doesn't mean everything is relative or that we can only decide for ourselves what is sinful. It means that the criteria for what is sinful is rooted in what stands in the way of healthy and loving relationships.

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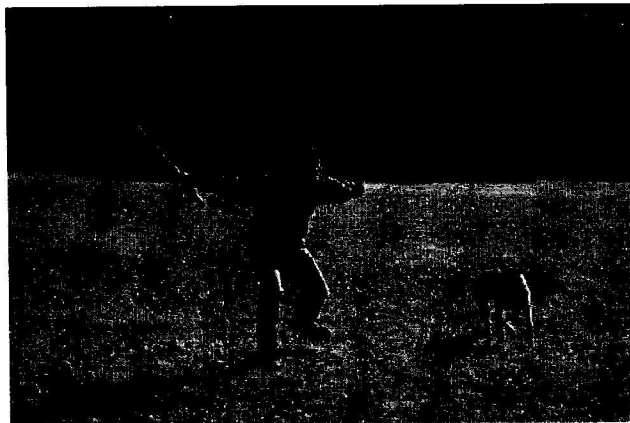
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But sin can trip us up in another way: the apostle Paul observed that the very times when he tried hardest to do what was right were the times when he most easily fell prey to the habits and false promises which led him away from right relationships.

Those who have gone bowling or played darts know the principal involved. Hitting your mark sometimes requires a surrender, or a 'letting go' more than trying harder. Living into love's way requires more than a condemnation of evil. It requires that we repent, or turn away from the things which we've grown convinced can satisfy us, and with open hearts turn toward the things which actually unite us with the divine and each



other. acting on faith. It requires that we move away from our fears and toward the promises of love.

Perhaps during this season of Lent you would consider letting go of something that you suspect stands in the way of your being in healthier relationship with family or neighbors, near or far. And perhaps, more importantly, you'll find some practice which you could embrace, if only during Lent, which might demonstrate your movement toward the promise of love.

Since my parents' deaths in December, I've become deeply convinced about the value of communicating with family and friends. Too often, I've let my schedule run me, rather than me run my schedule. Communication takes time, and I have decided to make more time in my schedule for it.



other.

Inasmuch as this requires trusting in things which we've not yet learned to trust, it requires



How about you? Are you ready to embrace a practice for living in honor of the Love which makes our living worth the while? Do you need to try letting go of something which makes it harder for you to be healthy and loving? Would you like the help of a spiritual family to support such a change?

Let us know. That's what brothers and sisters can offer each other. That's what it means for us to repent, to turn from sin, and embrace life. For disciples of Jesus, our journey moves through seasons of surrender as love positions us for new life.

Fear grows out of the things we think...Compassion grows out of the things we are... Michael Garrison

## Shared Prayer Requests

### In Our Community:

- For **Alice Dalrymple**, recuperating at home from her cataract surgery this week.
- For the family and friends of Pastor Ken, mourning the loss of his cousin, **Cooper Rieman**, who suffered from Muscular Dystrophy.
- For the Lamont and Taylor families, mourning the loss of **Audrey Taylor** on January 22, 2009.
- For **Dorothy Johnson**, recovering at Foss Home from heart valve replacement surgery.
- For the **Rieman and Miller Rieman families**, mourning the deaths of Pastor Ken Miller Rieman's parents, **Louie and Phil Baldwin Rieman**.
- For **Elsie Clayton**, who has had surgery for a shattered wrist and is recuperating at home.
- For the Edmarks' nephew, **Thomas Tsoukalas**, who is at home now and doing better.
- For **Jean Ulery and Evelyn Merritt**, recovering from knee replacement surgeries.

### Ongoing prayer requests:

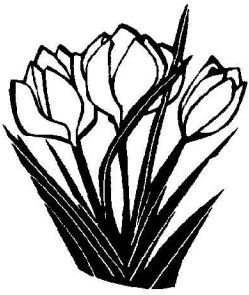
- Jimmy Barnes; Geraldine Campbell;**
- Chris Pride; Gene & Donna Harnden;**
- Bill Case's daughter, Carol Kamada;**
- Lew Fortin's nephew, Michael Rogers;**
- Richard Shoemaker, Bill Shoemaker's brother;**
- Sharon Haley's brothers, Mark and Paul Andrews;**
- Lowell Geiver; Patti Berg; Eileen Birky's mother;**
- Vera Gastfield; Lois Thomsen**

### Our Nation, State, and World:

- For all who have been affected by rising unemployment and economic challenges.
- For all who have been displaced or hurt by the recent, local floods in Oregon and Washington.
- For peace in Iraq and all countries.
- For people throughout the world coping with the death or imminent loss of a loved one.
- For democratic reform and the protection of civil rights in Pakistan, Kenya, Sudan, Chad, Burma, Zimbabwe, and Tibet.
- For protection from violence and banditry in Moundou, Chad, where Smith-Derksons work.



*Peacefully. Simply. Together.*



Do you have **flowers** you would like to donate to the church for Sunday altar-pieces?

Please contact me for information on making donations of flowers.

Blessings & thanks,  
Cathy Oberg  
(206) 525-4516



## Heirs by Grace

by Asha Solanky

Fresh from the Word, February 16

*...the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel (Eph. 3:6 NKJV).*

This scripture reads like a composition teacher's nightmare. Starts and stops, introductions in the middle, run-on sentences, and then a mystery tossed in for good measure. Paul wrote this letter from prison to the members of the very culturally and ethnically diverse church in Ephesus. During Paul's time the barriers between Jews and Gentiles were very rigid. Racially motivated contempt and exclusivism were predominant behaviors of the day. The Jews saw themselves as the group in relationship with God and rightful heirs to the boundless riches of Christ.

Paul's mystery is the heretofore unrevealed idea that all people, Jews and Gentiles alike, are co-heirs with Israel, members together as one body, with a right to share together the promise in Jesus Christ. Paul is clear that God chose to reveal this mystery to him. God gave him stewardship of sharing his uncovered mystery with the Gentiles. Bold, sometimes arrogant, and oftentimes painfully blunt, Paul saw himself in the role of a servant whose commission it was to preach to the Gentiles and share the news of the gift of God's grace and compassion.

## Devotional Reading

As God's heirs we have great privileges. God has broken down the barriers that once separated us and by grace reconciles us both with him and with each other. But like Paul we are also his servants charged with the stewardship of sharing the good news of the gospel with all people around us.

*Prayer: God of Grace, we thank you for the great privileges you grant to us, your children and heirs. Give us the courage to be good and humble stewards of sharing your good news. Amen.*



*Paul writing in captivity, Rembrandt*

## 2009 Deacon Training Meetings

**February 24**

**May 26**

**September 29**

**November 24**

*all meetings begin at 6:30 PM,  
Tuesdays.*

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## May Away is May 15-17, 2009

Please see Jim or Goldie Barnes to reserve your spot. (Payment for the first night is required as a deposit.)

The OV Friends will travel to the Pacific Beach resort for May Away this year.

*Fear grows out of the things we think...Compassion grows out of the things we are... Michael Garrison*

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## Upcoming Choir Dates

### Practice

Wednesday, March 4  
Wednesday, March 18

Wednesday, April 8  
Wednesday, April 22

The choir sings during Worship on:  
3/8, 3/22, 4/12, 4/16

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## Olympic View Graduate Breakfast

If you or a family member will be graduating from High School, College, or another stage of your education, please call the church office or Goldie Barnes so that we can honor you at our June 2009 Olympic View Graduation Breakfast.

### Contact Info:

Goldie Barnes (360) 659-4703  
Olympic View Office (206) 525-8900



## Audrey Taylor Memorial Service

A memorial service will be held on Saturday, March 7, 2009 at 11:30 am to remember former, active Olympic View member, Audrey Taylor.

The memorial will be followed by a light luncheon in the Olympic View Social Hall.

Please call or email Olympic View with questions,

### Contact Info:

(206) 525-8900  
kim@olympicchurch.org

## Dear Olympic View,

Your donations of food and money to the **North Helpline / Northgate Food Bank** assisted many individuals and families in our area this winter. Olympic View donated 185 lbs. of groceries in December. We received a nice note of thanks from North Helpline that I've posted on the corkboard in the lobby.

Please keep Seattle's North Helpline network of services in mind as we leave the holidays behind; the unemployed, underemployed, disabled, and otherwise needy continue to struggle throughout the year.

To offer your continued support, please call the church office, or make a note on the memo line

Your donations of toys to the **Salvation Army's Toy 'n' Joy Drive** also assisted many area families in December. We received a nice note of thanks that I've posted on the corkboard in the lobby from Salvation Army. A special thank you each to Stephanie Herkelrath for orchestrating the toy drive and Pastor Ken for driving the toys (in the snow) down to the drop off site. Thanks to everyone! Great Work.

Thanks! Your community appreciates your generosity and spirit of service!

## Scattered Lenten Musings with Oscar Romero

By Cabe Matthews, Student Pastor

*With Christ, God has injected himself into history. With the birth of Christ, God's reign is now inaugurated in human time.*

*On this night, as every year for twenty centuries, we recall that God's reign is now in this world and that Christ has inaugurated the fullness of time. His birth attests that God is now marching with us in history, that we do not go alone.*

*Humans long for peace, for justice, for a reign of divine law, for something holy, for what is far from earth's realities. We can have such hope, not because we ourselves are able to construct the realm of happiness that God's holy words proclaim, but because the builder of a reign of justice, of love, and of peace is already in the midst of us.*

*-Oscar Romero, from a sermon preached on Christmas Day, 1977. Quoted from The Violence of Love, p. 25*

*We should not wonder that a church has a lot of cross to bear. Otherwise, it will not have a lot of resurrection. An accommodating church, a church that seeks prestige without the pain of the cross, is not the authentic church of Jesus Christ.*

*-Oscar Romero, from The Violence of Love, p. 37*

"With Christ," as Father Oscar Romero says so well, "God has injected himself into history." In the season of Lent, some might say, we inject ourselves into Christ's story. As we move into this season of Lent, we set our face toward Jerusalem with Jesus in Luke 9:51, and ultimately toward the events of Holy Week that will culminate in those most central events of the Christian story: the death and resurrection of Jesus.

We accompany Christ on this journey, and we do so with a heaviness of heart. Because we know that this road Christ is on will lead to a cross. We know that faithfulness to the reign of God tends all too often not to decrease our suffering but to increase it.

Don't get me wrong, pain is not something we should seek – it is no good in and of itself. But the easiest way to live is rarely the right way, and the best ways to live are very often not even presented as options to us. Because of this reality we need to rely heavily upon *imagination*. The Lenten journey with Christ through the cross and resurrection ought to shape our Christian imagination significantly.

For instance, our church historically has taken the stance that all war is incompatible with the

gospel of Jesus Christ. But our society has never held a similar conviction. The issue in our country seems always to be between two options: "(a) more war" or "(b) less war." Our society has no imagination for what "(c) no war" might look like. As Christians, however, we are called to a different vision of what might be. James Wm. McClendon compares the ultimate power for complete destruction found in nuclear weapons to Jesus' resurrection. But he ultimately concludes that, "while the worst man can do is bad indeed, it is immeasurably fainter, weaker than the best that God can do...in the history of Jesus earth's evil does not destroy heaven's hope" (*Ethics*, p. 323).

Our stance toward war is necessarily altered by this journey we take with Jesus up toward Jerusalem. But the ways we think about poverty, enemies, hospitality, the value of life, the material world, and our families ought to be radically altered as well. As we journey together toward Easter, the day that commemorates the central event of our faith, let us practice imagining together all the ways in which the radical newness inaugurated by Jesus necessarily makes demands on our lives today.



**The New Olympian** is published monthly by the Olympic View Community Church of the Brethren

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**We welcome you to our services.**

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